

The Provo Canyon Narrows

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# UDOT defers plans for bridge over Provo River

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PROVO — The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) is deferring plans to build a 1,000-foot bridge across Provo River in the canyon narrows.

Utah Transportation Commissioners voted Friday to delay a decision on how to handle up-canyon traffic through the scenic area of the canyon.

The 1,000-foot bridge, which would have crossed the river twice, drew strong opposition from environmentalists and fishermen, who claimed it would destroy the most scenic part of the canyon and one of the state's few Class A fisheries.

Commissioners say they will now study a plan to replace the bridge with twin tunnels, and will offer that plan for public comment.

PHOTO BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

changes in the plan but predicted the fundamental principles would be approved. "People, deep down, in the Congress can talk a good line on deficit reduction, but won't propose anything specific that really has much chance of passing," Pa-netta said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

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struction of at least two homes in the summer home development of Wildwood, located adjacent to the Sundance-Alpine Loop turnoff.

The twin tunnel alternative now includes two parallel tunnels for both lanes of traffic at Wildwood, and a single tunnel in the down-canyon lane at The Narrows.

UDOT and its consulting design engineers, Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade and Douglas, have been looking at what could be done to better the twin tunnel alternative. A so-called "false tunnel" at the mouth of the tunnel would reduce the required rock cuts, and retaining walls and a difference curve configuration would reduce the property taken at Wildwood, they reported.

Retaining walls can also be built to keep a minimum distance of 15 feet away from the Provo River. The cost of the twin tunnel alternative would be similar to the bridge alternative, said UDOT consultant Lee Abramson.

The plan would keep all four lanes of traffic on one side of the river through The Narrows, and would protect land and homes in Wildwood.

Julie Mack, spokesperson for Sundance, said her group is gratified UDOT found a way to stick to the original plan not to bridge the river or condemn any cabins in Wildwood.

"I feel it would benefit the community to hear that UDOT's preferred alternative has changed," she said.

In order to keep all traffic on one side of the river, UDOT's current alternative calls for drilling twin tunnels into the hillside just north of Wildwood. A third tunnel, downstream from the twin tunnels, will remain unchanged in the plans for down-canyon traffic.

The highway would also move 15 feet closer to the river's high water mark, and retaining walls would be installed.

Keane told the commission that engineers had rejected the twin tunnels because the alignment would have meant the destruction of two homes and a common area at Wildwood. Now, however, the engineers believe that by replacing a dirt sound berm with a concrete sound wall they can move the lanes closer to the community without destroying homes.

Lucille Taylor, president of the Wildwood Homeowners Association, said her group regrets the bridge idea didn't fly, "but we'll be glad to sit down and work with you on this plan."

Wildwood homeowners supported the bridge plan, but fishermen feared the bridge would destroy the canyon's most scenic area as well as wildlife.

Charlie Thompson, fishery specialist with the Division of Wildlife Resources, said, "There's no other river like this in Utah. You won't find the number of fishermen on this river anywhere else."

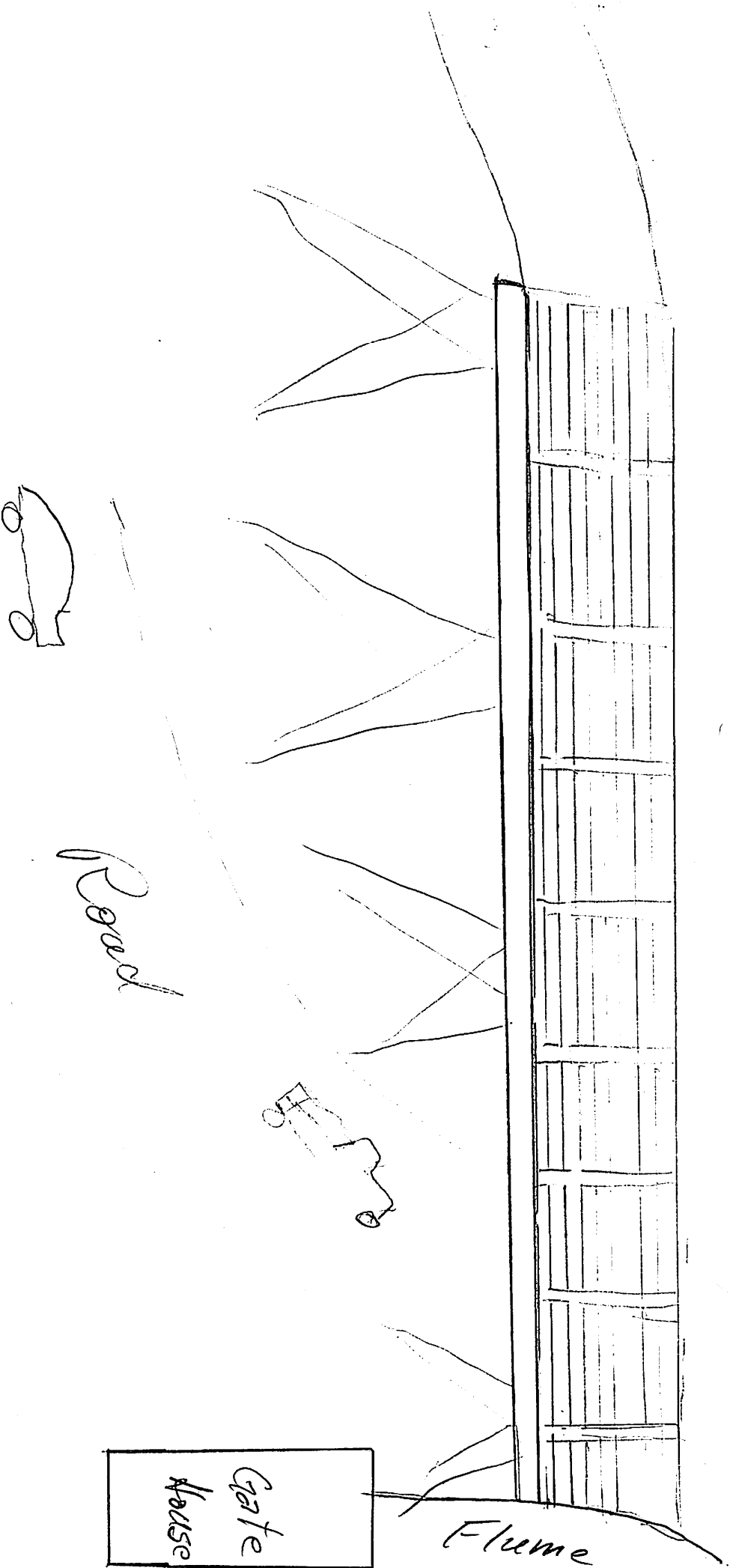
At the commission meeting, chairman Sam Taylor said he was "more comfortable" with the twin tunnels on one side of the river than the bridge. However, he expressed disgust with Sundance en-

vironmentalists for accusing UDOT of trying to sneak through the plan for the 1,000-foot bridge.

He said he knew of no project that has provided more opportunity for public involvement than this.

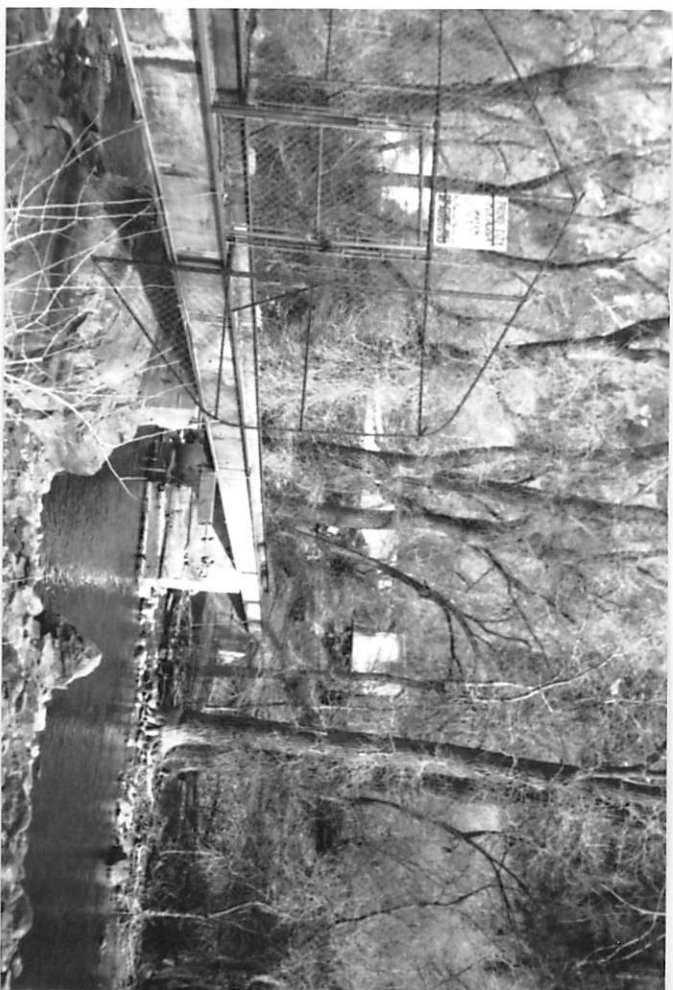
Provo Mayor Michael Hill said, "We feel it is time to begin construction on the next phase. Our personal feelings are that the safety of the traveling public outweighs all other considerations, and the environmental concerns have been properly addressed."

Nann's Crossing





*Dorman's Upper Falls Footbridge  
(Nunn's) to Pavo City Water  
Supply*



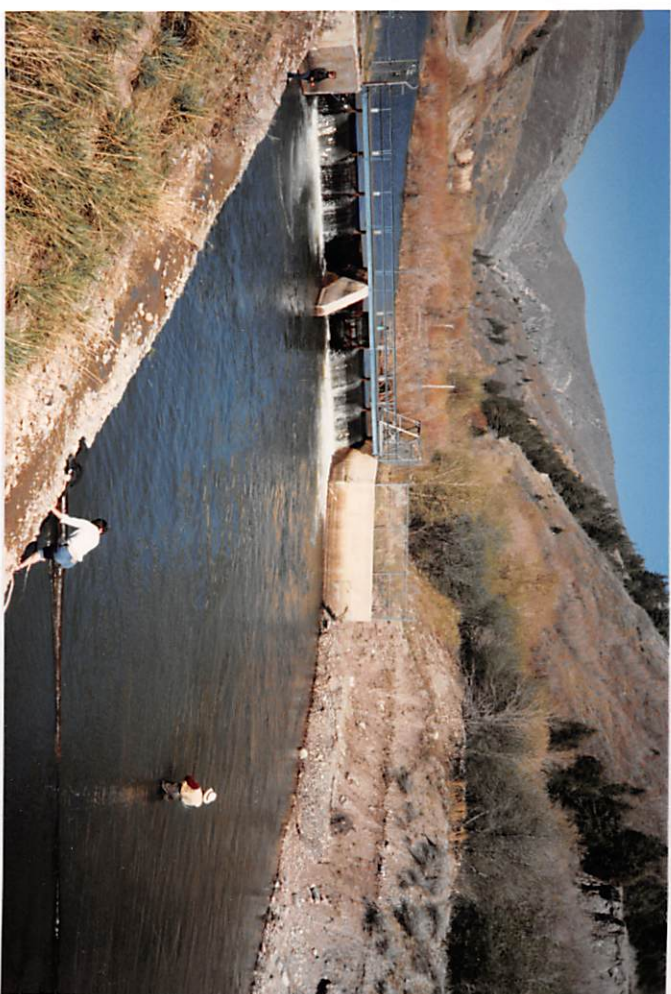






Bridge @  
2102 UPL  
Dam  
more  
views

Foot Bridge over Utah Power  
and Light Dam above Resort



Get  
Better  
Color  
bridge  
of this  
& up  
clear

Sig: q8h with



Footbridge and Diversion Dam  
North of Snowslide Canyon

